

line 14, change "oxidise" to --oxidized--;

line 19, change "optimised" to --optimized--;

line 24, change " oxidise" to --oxidized--.

Page 19, line 20, change " Whilst" to --While--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A lithographic projection apparatus comprising:
- an illumination system [for supplying] constructed and arranged to supply a projection beam of radiation;
 - a first object table provided with a first object holder [for holding] constructed and arranged to hold a mask;
 - a second object table provided with a second object holder [for holding] constructed and arranged to hold a substrate; and
 - a projection system [for imaging] constructed and arranged to utilize said radiation to image an irradiated portion of the mask onto a target portion of the substrate; [characterised by;] and
 - at least one of said illumination system and said projection system having an optical element [having] with a surface on which radiation [for the same wavelength as the radiation of said projection beam] is incident and a capping layer covering said surface, said capping layer being formed of a relatively inert material.

2. (Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1 wherein said relatively inert material is more inert than [the] material from which [the remainder] remaining portions of said optical element [is] are formed.

3. (Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1 [or 2] wherein said relatively inert material is less easily [oxidised] oxidized than the material from which [the remainder] remaining portions of said optical element [is] are formed.

4. (Amended) Apparatus according to claim 1, [2 or 3] wherein said relatively inert material is harder than [the] material from which [the remainder] remaining portions of said optical element is formed.

5. (Amended) Apparatus according to [any one of claims] claim 1 [to 4] wherein said optical element is a beam modifying element.

7. (Amended) Apparatus according to [any one of claims] claim 1 [to 4] wherein said optical element is a sensor.

8. (Amended) Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said capping layer has a thickness in the range of from 0.5 nm to 10nm[, preferably from 0.5 to 6nm and most preferably from 0.5 to 3nm].

9. (Amended) Apparatus according to [any one of the preceding claims] claim 1 wherein said relatively inert material is selected from the group

comprising: diamond-like carbon (f), boron nitride (BN), boron carbide (B_4C_9), silicon nitride (Si_3N_4), silicon carbide (SiC), B, Pd, Ru, Rh, Au, MgF_2 , LiF, C_2F_4 , [and] TiN and compounds and alloys thereof.

10. (Amended) Apparatus according to [any one of claims] claim 1 [to 8] wherein said capping layer comprises two [or three] sub-layers of different materials.

11. (Amended) Apparatus according to claim 10 wherein said optical element comprises;

a reflector having a multilayer reflective coating on said surface, said multilayer reflective coating comprising a plurality of layers of a first material having a relatively low refractive index at the wavelength of said projection beam;

[alternating with] layers of a second material having a relatively high refractive index at said wavelength and alternating with said layers of said first material; and

said capping layer comprises.

a first sub-layer of said first material[.];

a second sub-layer of a third material having a refractive index at said wavelength higher than said first material and being more inert than said second material[.]; and

a third sub-layer formed of a fourth material that is relatively inert,

said first, second and third sub-layers being provided in that order with said third sub-layer outermost.

13. (Amended) Apparatus according to claim 12 wherein:

said first material is one or more materials selected from the group comprising: Mo, Ru, Rh, Nb, Pd, Y₁ and Zr, [as well as] and compounds and alloys [of these elements] thereof;

said second material is one or more materials selected from the group comprising Be, Si, Sr, Rb, RbCL₁ [and] P [as well as] and compounds and alloys of these elements;

said third material is selected from the group comprising B₄C₃BN₂ diamond-like C, Si₃N₄ and SiC; and

said fourth material is selected from the group comprising Ru, Rh, Pd and diamond-like C.

14. (Amended) Apparatus according to [any one of the preceding claims] claim 1 wherein said projection beam comprises [extreme ultraviolet] radiation, [e.g.] having a wavelength in the range of from 8 nm to 20nm[, especially 9 to 16 nm].

15. (Amended) A device manufacturing method using a lithographic apparatus comprising:

[an illumination system for supplying a projection beam of radiation;
a first object table provided with a first object holder for holding a mask;
a second object table provided with a second object holder for holding a substrate; and

a projection system for imaging an irradiated portion of the mask onto a target portion of the substrate; said method comprising the steps of:]

providing a mask containing a pattern to [said] a first object table;

providing a substrate at least partially covered by a layer of energy-sensitive material to [said] a second object table; and

irradiating said mask and imaging irradiated portions of said pattern onto said substrate; [characterised in that]:

[said lithographic projection apparatus comprises at least one optical element having a surface on which radiation of the same wavelength as the wavelength of said projection beam is incident and a capping layer covering said surface, said capping layer being formed of a relatively inert material.]

said irradiating comprising reflecting radiation off of a surface of an optical element, the surface having a capping layer formed of a relatively inert material.

Please add claims 17-19 as follows:

--17. Apparatus according to claim 8 wherein said capping layer has a thickness in the range of from 0.5 nm to 6 nm.

18. Apparatus according to claim 17 wherein said capping layer has a thickness in the range of from 0.5 nm to 3 nm.

19. Apparatus according to claim 14 wherein said projection beam comprises radiation having a wavelength in the range of from 9 nm to 16 nm --